



Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/32
14 January 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 13 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to transmit herewith a letter from Mr. Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, concerning the Ethiopian aggression against Sudanese territory in the Blue Nile State, on the country's eastern borders, addressed to the Security Council.

I would like to request you to bring the contents of this urgent letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council so that they may take appropriate measures.

I would also request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Elfatih ERWA
Permanent Representative



Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 13 January 1997 from Mr. Ali Osman Mohamed Taha,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, addressed to the
President of the Security Council

Sir

1. As you are aware, the Sudan has been keeping the Security Council regularly informed about the acts of provocation and aggression committed by Ethiopia on the Sudan's eastern borders (documents S/1996/29 and S/1996/255). The Sudan has exercised self-restraint in the face of the Ethiopian aggression in an attempt to settle the dispute peacefully in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. However, I regret to inform you and, through you, the members of the Security Council, that Ethiopia has carried out further acts of aggression against Sudanese territory as follows:

(a) On Sunday, 12 January 1997, the Ethiopian army attacked Sudanese territory with heavy artillery (120 mm guns and 130 mm shells) from within Ethiopian territory. The shelling started at 5.30 a.m. and continued until 11.30 a.m., resulting in the destruction of the town of Kurmuk, capital of the governorate of Kurmuk in the Blue Nile State.

(b) On Sunday, 12 January 1997, at 3 p.m., those same forces shelled Gizan, Yarada and Menze, towns on the border between the two countries.

(c) The shelling of these towns was followed by an attack by one Ethiopian infantry division comprising 6,000 men supported by 22 tanks. The Ethiopian forces were accompanied by a few elements of the rebel movement, the so-called Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) under the command of Ethiopian officers. The attack resulted in the occupation of the above-mentioned areas.

(d) On the morning of Monday, 13 January 1997, the invading Ethiopian forces continued to advance inside Sudanese territory and continued to shell the Sudanese towns of Shally and Daim Mansour with the intention of occupying them.

2. I would like to draw your attention to the following geographical facts which leave no room for any possible denial by Ethiopia of the heinous crime it has committed.

(a) The areas attacked and overrun by the Ethiopian army are located exactly on the border between the two countries. Ethiopian government forces are permanently stationed a few hundred metres across the border inside Ethiopian territory.

(b) The sole and only access to the attacked Sudanese areas is across the Ethiopian border and from the Ethiopian military camps established there.

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(c) The continuous heavy artillery shelling that preceded the attack was directed from within Ethiopian territory. The attack was launched exactly from the positions of the Ethiopian armed forces where these forces had assembled in preparation for the attack.

3. The Ethiopian aggression constitutes a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international norms and the principles of good-neighbourliness. It also represents a serious threat to international peace and security. This aggression, which follows a series of violations committed by Ethiopia against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Sudan, could result in a generalized confrontation in the region; this would affect international peace and security.

4. While reserving its right to self-defence which is recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Sudan would like to draw the Council's attention to this situation so that it may hold an emergency meeting to discuss the matter and to take whatever measures are necessary to secure the respect by Ethiopia for the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, and to compel it to withdraw its forces from Sudanese territory and to refrain from any further aggression of that nature in the future.

(Signed) Ali Osman Mohamed Taha
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Sudan
